

Preface

Toxic and Environmental Neurology



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Environmental conditions and toxins are important and under-recognized causes of neurologic disease. In addition to chemical toxins, extremes of cold, heat, and altitude all can have adverse effects on our bodies and nervous systems. As medical and scientific knowledge increases, more toxic and environmental causes of diseases are discovered.

Society continues to advance technologically. As it progresses, we often place ourselves into new situations and environments exposing ourselves to new substances. Some of these environments and substances may be harmful. It is reasonable to expect that we will continue to experience diseases caused by toxins and environments throughout our foreseeable future as a species.

This work is divided into sections. The first section is an overview of toxic neurology, including basic science, embryology, and neurotoxins in history. The second section is a systems-based approach to neurotoxic disorders. Next is a section on controversies in neurotoxicology, such as that regarding Gulf War syndrome. There also is a section covering the dangers of specific environments, such as wilderness and high altitudes. Finally, the issue ends with a section on neurologic weapons, detailed reviews of biological and chemical weapons that target the nervous system.

We have tried to piece together a broad compilation of reviews of toxins, situations, and environments likely to be harmful to the nervous system. We are proud that many of our contributors are military clinicians. It is our hope that this issue of *Neurologic Clinics* will aid the reader in patient care, research, and education.

We would like to thank all of the authors who contributed to this issue. We appreciate Sarah Barth and Bob Gardler at Elsevier for their patience in dealing with inexperienced Guest Editors. Most of all, however, we want to thank our wives, Betsy and Beth, for bearing with us as we completed this task.

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